

Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife Refuge Complex
Comprehensive Conservation Plan

Issue Fact Sheet

The Issue: Public Access

Background: The Refuge is a long narrow resource touching many jurisdictions of local government and untold numbers of privately owned parcels along its hundreds of miles of shoreline. There are 228* developed boat accesses and marinas from lower Lake Pepin to LeClaire, Iowa. In addition there are numerous walk-ins and roadsides where access management and control is varied and inconsistent.

The Refuge maintains 23 boat landings with 700 parking spaces, accommodating flat bottom boats, v-bottom fishing boats, runabouts, powerboats, pontoon boats, canoes, and kayaks. Refuge kiosks are placed at 29 additional access points which are maintained by other jurisdictions.

**Iowa DNR Mississippi River Recreational Boating Guide and the Minnesota DNR Mississippi River Guide were used to count access points.*

Main Concerns:

1. A segment of the public feels that there are not enough access points for bank and ice fishing.
2. To access the refuge for ice fishing the public often parks on roadsides, crosses over railroad tracks and sometimes crosses private property.
3. There is inadequate funding at all levels to establish, maintain and publicize public access.